



# Onondaga County Legislature

**JAMIE McNAMARA**  
Clerk

**TIMOTHY T. BURTIS**  
Chairman

**TAMMY BARBER**  
Deputy Clerk

401 Montgomery Street • Court House • Room 407 • Syracuse, New York 13202  
Phone: 315.435.2070 • [onondagacountylegislature@ongov.net](mailto:onondagacountylegislature@ongov.net) • [www.ongov.net/legislature](http://www.ongov.net/legislature)

## PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES – MAY 21, 2025 DAVID H. KNAPP, CHAIR

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mr. Meaker, Ms. Fiato, Ms. Harvey

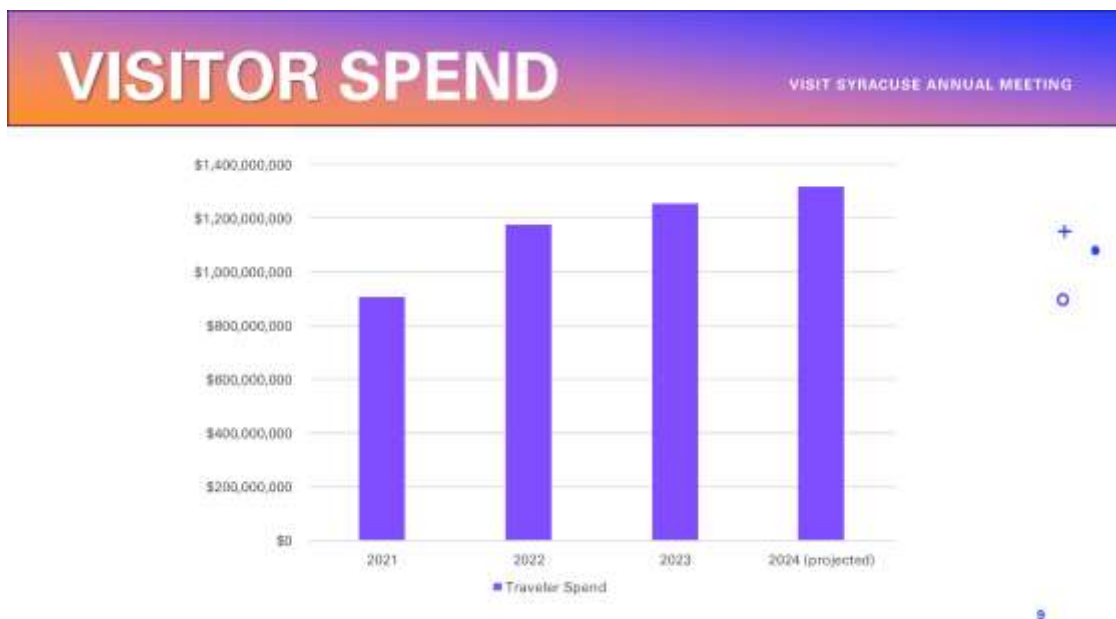
**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Mr. Olson

**ALSO ATTENDING:** Chairman Burtis, Mr. Romeo; also see attached

Chair Knapp called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. and the previous meeting's minutes were approved.

1. **VISIT SYRACUSE:** Danny Liedka, President & CEO
  - a. **INFORMATIONAL:** Annual Report





- 2018 visitor spend was ~ \$725M; bowling congress had ~ \$75M economic impact the same year
- 2024 will go down as a record year and will exceed \$1.3B
- 1 in 11 jobs in Onondaga County is tourism related
- The only city beating Syracuse in rate of growth is NYC



- Hotel inventory is decreasing, but year to year, hotel room sales are increasing
  - Sales numbers have doubled in 7 years
- With hotels going offline and the 81 project underway, Syracuse is currently in flux
  - Have been able to transport guests to suburban hotels to keep business



- Visit Syracuse attends 25 in-person conventions each year
- Canada is an obstacle for tourism this year
  - Canadian spend is 10-15% of tourism spend in the County, ~ \$120M
  - Canadian web traffic has dropped 50%
  - Will need to double down on other markets
  - NYC has become number one market
  - A shortage in sales tax at the end of the year could be a result of Canada

VISIT SYRACUSE ANNUAL MEETING

## VISIT SYRACUSE FILM OFFICE

**HIGHLIGHTS & NEW INFRASTRUCTURE**

The Visit Syracuse Film Office was represented at the Location Managers Guild International Awards by Vice President Eric Vinat, and had a presence throughout the awards, with a program ad. The team also partnered with Studio Central to promote the region with an ad placed in the *Hollywood Reporter*.

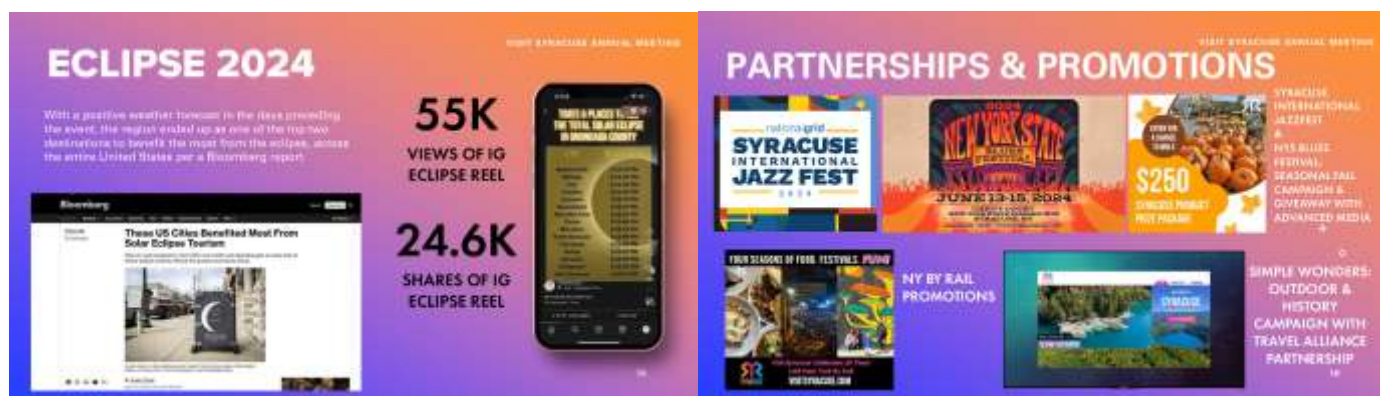
Additionally, the Syracuse area film community welcomed a brand-new post-production facility, Studio Central.

**\$30M+ IN PRODUCTION BUDGETS**

- New Film facility on Fayette Street does post production
  - Post production lasts 4-6 months with 4-6 people staying in hotels and eating in restaurants
- There has been \$30M in film production over the last few years
  - When handled through the County, the highest was \$6M
- Governor announced that the film tax budget will be good through 2036



- Receiving coverage from major publications



- According to Bloomberg, Syracuse had highest economic impact from the eclipse from Texas to New York
- Receive content from partnerships to promote events on social media channels



- Try to utilize student athletes to help promote smaller local businesses
  - Economic impact of Syracuse football grew by \$43M in Fran Brown's 1st year



- Thanks to the Legislature, Visit Syracuse was able to upgrade website
  - Will have 2.8M views this year; time on site is 1 minute; industry standard is 20 seconds
- Partner with local media for digital marketing campaigns, but majority is created in house
- The Tour App allows people to take a narrated tour through Syracuse from their phone



- Will be more involved in local charity events to help promote their events and mission



- Visit Syracuse invests in continuing education for staff
- Employees must commit to 3 trainings each year; 1 needs to be out of Syracuse to build skill set

# VISITOR PROFILES

VISIT SYRACUSE ANNUAL MEETING



- ROI is a little over \$3M from bed tax; over \$60M in sales tax

## Questions/Comments from the Committee:

- What is the plan on handling Route 81?
  - Competitors definitely use the 81 disruption to their advantage
    - There may be a dip for a short time, but market will correct itself
  - The peak of disruption is in line with new hotels going up
    - Will have 3 new 4 star hotels; almost 700 rooms in close proximity
    - Will be able to go back after the NCAA Championships and bowlers
- Will transportation still need to be provided when the new downtown hotels are up and running?
  - Some transport is weather dependent
  - Walkability is #1 reason business is lost, so it is an issue
  - Fayette/Warren hotel is ideally located
  - Transportation will always be a piece of the puzzle and it is budgeted for accordingly
- Visit Syracuse has built a great team
- The Film facility on Fayette St. is amazing
- Syracuse has everything to make a movie
  - Encourage legislators to take a tour
  - Funded with private dollars
- Is Visit Syracuse on Tik Tok?
  - Yes, started 18 months ago
- Is there a partnership with Turning Stone?
  - Turning Stone is the most difficult competitor; very private; cannot get insight
    - Have a partnership but difficult to take from them
    - County will get some business because their target convention customer has changed
    - They keep adding convention space because they want to keep the spend for themselves
    - There is talk of adding outdoor sports fields, which is very concerning

- Is there a partnership with TBT for the basketball tournament?
  - Visit Syracuse brought them to the County, but they are on their own now and self-sufficient
  - It is good that Coach Boeheim is involved and the game will be held in the County
  - Will help market but do not see as a long-term sustainable event
- How is the night life for attracting people?
  - Food scene is wonderful
  - Night life will get better when strategic investments are made in the music scene
    - Will be putting more resources into music sector over the next 12-24 months
    - Did the marketing and helped grow Jazz Fest and Rhythm and Blues Festival
    - Syracuse is the poor man's Nashville; can see music every night of the year
- Did the bus route from New York City to Niagara Falls come back after COVID?
  - Yes, it has come back, growth has been positively surprising
  - Visit Syracuse goes to 2 bus shows each year; Ontario Motor Coach Association and IPW
    - Have 15 new pieces of businesses as a result of the shows
  - World Cup will be in New York next year; international travelers stay for a week or two
    - Will work with ticket agencies and promotional companies to get Syracuse as a destination

## 2. **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY:** Kevin Sexton, Chief Information Officer

### a. **Authorizing Execution of Intergovernmental Agreements With New York State Concerning Joint Security Operations Center Cybersecurity Programs, Systems, and/or Services**

- Seeking authorization for additional cybersecurity services offered through NYS free of charge
- Joint Security Operation Center is a combination of NYS IT Services and NYS Division of Homeland Security that monitors malicious activity for various municipalities starting with counties and then adding towns and villages
  - CloudStrike (detects and mitigates viruses, malware, ransomware)
  - SIM (Systems Incident and event Monitoring service) alerts risks
    - County is currently using a SIM and paying \$50K
    - Would like to use the NYS service and compare to the SIM currently using
    - Could potentially save \$50K with this service
  - Tax Service Management continuously monitors external facing environments (ie: ongov.net) and identifies vulnerabilities; malicious attacks
    - County has firewall but would need to run queries in real time and manually manipulate information
    - ASM can provide same information through NYS

### **Questions/Comments from the Committee:**

- There is no cost and there is a net savings?
  - Yes
- Are computers under attack every day?
  - Yes
- Do all counties participate?
  - This is a new program and municipalities are coming on board
  - A high percentage of counties are using CloudStrike which is the best in the industry
- Did the state buy the services for all municipalities?
  - Yes
- Are there any negative aspects?
  - Have not seen anything negative
  - Other services use resources on individual computers that slow them down
  - All services are utilizing AI for detection of threats because it recognizes the pattern and stops it

- Do internet providers offer protection?
  - Internet providers will protect to a very limited degree
  - Windows has limited basic end point protection as well
  - Protections purchased for home systems should be renewed
- Is this a cloud based protection?
  - Yes, most run in the cloud
- Law Department
  - This resolution will authorize similar JSOC no cost agreements in the future
- Are there ransomware problems within the County?
  - County has multi-layered protections in place to defend against attacks, but not bullet proof
  - Frequently receive alerts when new software is being installed
  - Need to educate users on how to do the right things
    - Phishing programs present authentic looking messages that can trick users
  - Have not had anything bad happen in the last year
- How are people getting money stolen from their Health Assistance Medicaid cards?
  - Many times, people are tricked by phone calls or emails to install something on their computer which could provide access to account information and passwords
  - Need awareness on social engineering which can come through phone calls, emails, texts
  - County has some social engineering training, but trying to find appropriate training for users
- Having Social Services address social engineering issue when someone signs up may be helpful
- Has IT been able to recruit people?
  - Doing ok, looking into having dedicated services to help departments implement AI services
  - Do not have a lot of turnover, have had luck replacing retirees
  - Have a great team with a lot of knowledge
  - There may come a time when additional support is needed

***A motion was made by Mr. Meaker, seconded by Ms. Fiato, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.***

**3. PLANNING:** Troy Waffner, Director

**a. Approving the Inclusion of Viable Agricultural Land Within Certified Agricultural Districts Pursuant to Section 303-B of the New York State Agriculture and Markets Law**

***PURPOSE:***

*This resolution calls for the County Legislature to make a finding as to whether the land to be added to an agricultural district consists of predominantly viable agricultural land.*

***OBJECTIVE/ WORK PLAN:***

*New York's Agricultural Districts Law, Article 25-AA PDF of the NYS Agriculture and Markets Law was enacted in 1971 to help keep farmland in agricultural production. Agricultural districts are designed to protect agriculture through a combination of landowner incentives and protections that discourage the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses.*

*Responsibility for the creation, review and management of the State's agricultural districts lies within the authority of the county's legislative bodies. AML Sections 303 (district creation), 303-a (district review), 303-b (annual inclusion/addition of lands) and 303-c (district consolidation) detail the role county agricultural and farmland protection boards and legislative bodies play in district creation and review and prescribe the public notice and public hearing requirements.*

*Per Section 303-b, landowners can submit requests during an annual thirty-day period for the inclusion of predominantly viable agricultural lands within certified agricultural districts. Pursuant to Onondaga County Resolution No. 71-2004, that thirty-day period is to occur January 1-30 of each year.*

*The Onondaga County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board (AFPB) then prepares a report with a recommendation as to whether the land to be included in an agricultural district consists of predominantly viable agricultural land and presents it to the County Legislature, who is to hold a public hearing and then make its finding. The County Legislature then submits the final report with its finding to the Commissioner of Agriculture & Markets for certification.*

*During January 1-30, 2025 landowners made requests to add two parcels totaling 28 acres in the Towns of Manlius and LaFayette to an agricultural district. The Onondaga County Department of Planning prepared a report, and at its March 25, 2025 meeting the AFPB reviewed and voted to forward the report and recommendation for the inclusion of predominantly viable agricultural lands within a certified agricultural district to the Onondaga County Legislature. The Onondaga County Legislature then authorized a public hearing to be held at 12:50 pm, prior to the June 3, 2025 session.*

**FUNDING SOURCE:** No fiscal impact

**BUDGET:** No fiscal impact

**A motion was made by Mr. Meaker, seconded by Ms. Fiato, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.**

#### **b. INFORMATIONAL: Quarterly Update on PlanOn**





## PLAN ON strong centers

Amenity-rich, vibrant, and walkable centers can strengthen the quality of life and improve the economic stability of local communities.

Support + Enhance Existing and New Centers of All Scales

Incorporate Multi-Modal Options As a Central Element of Centers

Invest in Public Places and Spaces Within Existing and New Centers

Seek strategic investments at all scales to enhance existing and develop new Centers



## PLAN ON housing + neighborhoods

To retain as well as attract future residents, housing in the county needs to be affordable, efficient, diverse, and attractive.

Meet the Need

Expand Housing Choice

Targeted Market-Driven Programs to Support Neighborhood Health

Support and Enhance Neighborhoods

### Planning for Growth Housing Onondaga: Phase I

#### Findings and Needs

- 1 Onondaga County could grow by 24,000 households by 2040.
- 2 Countywide, net new households would be fewer than two people on average.
- 3 It is uncertain how many of the new households will be owners or renters.
- 4 The number of senior renters could grow by 8,000.
- 5 Inventory in Onondaga County is tight and likely temporary.
- 6 New construction is getting more expensive.
- 7 Regulations can be an issue for timely project approval and cost escalation.
- 8 Affordability is a challenge.



HOUSING  
MARKET STUDY

- CZB Consulting did Phase 1

### Planning for Growth Housing Onondaga: Phase II



HOUSING  
MARKET STUDY



|                                              |                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Refresh Market Math                          | Updated understanding of the market and development picture.                                                                                                 |
| Identify Financial Gaps                      | Based on the market math, estimate per-unit gaps for both new construction & rehab.                                                                          |
| Assess Existing Programs                     | Once gaps are identified, review current programs to determine if they are sufficient and properly designed to achieve desired outcomes.                     |
| Recommend New Programs                       | If needed, recommend novel interventions with designs and cost that are sized for the desired outcomes.                                                      |
| Housing Opportunity Typology                 | Develop a typology of housing opportunities based on the market and development conditions, local context and tenure.                                        |
| Partner with High Opportunity Municipalities | Based on the housing needs, typologies, current and emerging programs work with municipalities on recommendations for policy, planning and code adjustments. |

- Identify the land available that has access to public water and sewers

## Planning for Growth Results So Far



### Residential + Mixed-Use Development

(Initiated since Nov 2022  
Miron announcement)

- 150 projects
- 15,500 multi-family units
- 1,700 single-family units
- 3,000 Special Units
- 40% of new units in Syracuse
- 2.9 msf of commercial in mixed-use projects

- Special units are senior housing and the like

### PLAN ON community mobility

Enhancing mobility means better access and better options to move people throughout the county.

Prepare for Our Transportation Future

Vision Zero Community

Invest in Transit Corridors

Connected Network of Bike Lanes, Trails and Multi-Modal Corridors



### County Investments in Community Mobility



- Have \$450K grant from federal government for a Safe Streets For All study to get closer to vision zero community
- Will look at accident rate at intersections and roadways and eliminate dangers
- Will be going out to bid in the next few weeks

### PLAN ON greenways + blueways

Providing unique opportunities for recreation, wildlife habitat, and ecological protection.

Formalize Greenway and Blueway System Planning

Continue to Invest in the Development of a Countywide Multi-Use Trail Network

Invest in the Development of a Countywide Blueway System

Preserve Ecological Assets Within Greenways and Blueways



- County put out a \$1.1M grant program for towns and villages to build on greenways and blueways

## Greenways + Blueways: Development Plan



|                                |                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Defining Greenways + Blueways  | Establish typology definitions with characteristics, a hierarchy for each corridor and metrics for each corridor.                                       |
| Greenways + Blueways Inventory | Compile a comprehensive, GIS-based inventory of existing and planned corridors, establishing key objectives for each and identifying gaps.              |
| Vision + Strategy Development  | Develop an overarching vision with actionable steps and measurable goals and an implementation framework.                                               |
| Priority Projects              | Identify priority projects based on a matrix that accounts for known gaps, community input, demand and environmental significance.                      |
| Municipal Toolkit              | Produce a toolkit for communities that will provide guidance on design and safety standards, management and maintenance and best practice applications. |
| Funding Sources                | Provide an analysis and listing of public and private funding sources for implementation, development and maintenance of a corridor system.             |

## Greenways + Blueways: Investments



### PLAN ON agriculture

*Local agriculture is vital to the future success of Onondaga County's economy, landscape and food system.*

Support Local Farms

Protection of Lands

Grow the Ag Economy

Agritourism



## Promotion

### Buy Local. Buy Onondaga Grown

- Media campaign in its 10<sup>th</sup> year
- Radio, television, and social media
- Seeks to promote and educate the public about agriculture in the county
- Increase support and demand for locally grown food

### ON Farm Fest

- Annual day on the farm event
- Helps to build a relationship between food producers and consumers
- Encourages the community to visit, tour, and support local farms
- Family friendly, fun event with music, food, and giveaways



- Onondaga County has some of the best soil in NYS
- 1-2% of population grow the food
- On-fest is 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday every September, which draws people to visit farms to see what it takes to produce food



# CNY REGIONAL MARKET

SHOP FRESH. EAT LOCAL.



- 50 acre campus with large pockets of undeveloped or needs to be redeveloped areas



- Phase 1
  - Commission Houses were built in 1938 and house the food wholesalers; 40,000 square feet in total
  - Will build new food distribution warehouse and add on a food production warehouse
  - Will move wholesalers to more efficient space
  - Food production warehouse
    - Allows food to be minimally processed into serving sizes, individual quick freezing (IQF) etc.
  - Commission Houses can then be repurposed for event space

- All sheds need improvements
- Improve the Northside entrance, City of Syracuse to improve crosswalks and intersections
- \$4M from County will go to new gateway entrance, ghost kitchens, shed improvements
- Will try again next year for State level money; State currently needs a lot of money for Upstate renovations

#### Questions/Comments from the Committee:

- Connectivity within neighborhoods is a serious issue and needs to be pursued
- Would like to talk to investors/developers about their ideas to get solidified into a plan
  - Connectivity is creating a sense of place, will need to be embodied in the design work
  - Some municipalities taking easements from developers upfront where trails are wanted
  - Large number of people pass through Onondaga County on the trail from Buffalo to Albany to New York City
- Law Department
  - Will sidewalks be connected at the new candle factory
    - Yes, County DOT is talking to the town about a connection there
- How long before things will get started at the market?
  - Design and engineering can take 6-8 months, sometimes a year
  - Do not have a firm time
- Will the Redistribution Center be complete within 2 years?
  - That is a \$20M+ project and depends on when funding is received
  - \$4M from the County will go towards 2 onsite kitchens, entranceway, and C-shed upgrade
  - \$2M that Assemblyman Magnarelli got will go into the A-shed
- Ghost kitchens will be in the Park Street Plaza building
- Community will see some progress even though the State is not able to provide funding this year
- There have been talks with the Syracuse Mets to rent space for events before or after games

The meeting was adjourned at 11:28 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



TAMMY BARBER, Deputy Clerk  
Onondaga County Legislature

#### ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
COMMITTEE

DATE: MAY 21, 2025

| NAME (Please Print) | DEPARTMENT/AGENCY |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| Kevin Sexton        | IT                |
| Dan Krantz          | CE                |
| John Desantis       | Leg               |
| Darcie Lesniak      | leg               |
| Jim Bube            | Leg               |
| Esther LaMontagne   | leg               |
| Danny Liedka        | Visit Syracuse    |
| Trev Waffner        | Planning          |
| Ben Yaus            | Law Dept          |
| Joe Frateschi       | Legal Counsel     |